

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	308497
Inspection date	20 February 2008
Inspector	Joan, Patricia Flowers

Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Childminding

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 1996. She lives with her husband and two children aged 16 and 17 years in a residential area on the outskirts of Preston. Local shops and open play spaces are within walking distance, and the childminder transports children in her car. The whole of the ground floor of the childminder's home is used for childminding purposes, except for the bedrooms. There is a securely enclosed garden for outside play. There are five children on roll, three of whom are aged under five years. All children attend on a part time basis, one during school holiday only. The family has a dog. The childminder attends the local parent and toddler group. Membership of the National Childminding Association is held and support and training is accessed from the local authority Sure Start development team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is given the highest possible priority and all ages follow clear hygiene and personal care routines. These are effectively overseen and guided by the childminder. Children each have their own towels and cups so that cross-infection is minimised well. The children

learn about health, nutrition and where their food comes from, and they enjoy the varied balanced homemade meals provided for them by the childminder so they can grow and develop. Meals are made using fresh ingredients and always include plenty of vegetables and fruit. Water or juice is readily available for the children throughout the day so they are hydrated. The childminder ensures all the children drink sufficiently throughout the day. The kitchen area and food preparation and storage are managed effectively by the childminder who has undertaken food hygiene training. Children's health is therefore protected.

Children greatly enjoy, and are stimulated by, the wide range of activities offered that contributes to their good health. Their physical abilities develop as they play on the extensive variety of equipment available in the garden. This is suitable for a wide age-range of children. They enjoy trips to the near by park and go to feed the ducks and observe the ducklings. Children's large muscle development is encouraged as they extend their physical abilities whilst climbing on the large equipment in the park. The visits to places of interest such as the animal farm provide other good opportunities for children to be outside in the fresh air. Clear routines enable children to sleep when they require it and have their nappies changed in a safe and hygienic manner. Children's health is further maintained because they each have their own personal items such as towels, cups and blankets. The clear sickness policy also enables children to remain in good health as the spread of infection is minimised.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a high standard of care in this warm, safe, child-friendly family home. Because the majority of the downstairs areas are used for childminding purposes, children have plenty of room to move around, and have variety in an environment where they can play safely. Regular informal risk assessments are undertaken in the home, including the rear garden area. This ensures that children are kept safe at all times. Age-appropriate safety equipment is used effectively, enabling children to move about freely, independently and safely at all times. Clear house rules and routines are discussed and implemented successfully. This includes the regular practising of the emergency evacuation drill to promote the welfare and safety of all children and adults, and to encourage children's understanding about their own safety and that of others. The children further benefited from practical advice from the fire safety officer when new smoke alarms were fitted recently.

The very wide range of toys and equipment, both inside and outside, is made available safely. Toys and equipment are in new or nearly new condition, maintained in a good state of repair and checked regularly by the childminder. Children's welfare and safety are expertly managed at all times, supported by clear documentation and the childminder's sound understanding of child protection matters. Children are safeguarded as a result.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive and develop in an environment that offers flexible care tailored to their individual needs. The childminder has a very good understanding of child development, and provides and adapts activities to meet the needs of all the children in her care. They enjoy a wide range of age-appropriate, stimulating and varied activities, both inside and outside the home, helping children to develop in all areas. Children are expertly supported in their play activities because the childminder constantly monitors, guides and plays with them. The extremely good balance

of activities offered ensures that children greatly enjoy their time spent with the childminder. She uses the 'Birth to three matters' framework to ensure children are encouraged in every aspect of their learning and early development.

There is a very wide range of age-appropriate equipment available throughout the ground floor of the house as well as in the garden. Play and learning resources are made easily accessible to the children, therefore their independence is encouraged as they learn to make choices from a young age. The childminder ensures their inquisitive minds are well stimulated and plans themes such as 'mini beasts', supported by very relevant visual displays and activities in the garden, plus access to reference books. She teaches children about where their food comes from as they discuss during trips to the shop about how, for example, the carrots get into the tin. Children pick herbs grown by the childminder to include in recipes, thus children make good links with the world around them. There is a good balance to the day, which includes quieter times as well as being very active. The childminder is extremely skilled at developing each child's knowledge and understanding through discussions and play. They learn about simple science during baking activities when they make rock cakes and pancakes and use all their senses when making popcorn. Children watch with interest how quickly their Amaryllis bulb grows and see the beautiful flowers as they emerge.

The childminder encourages children to problem-solve and think about how to do things, such as moving the chair far enough out from the table so they can sit on it safely. Children have many opportunities to experience and develop their physical skills when visiting the park or the play area at the garden centre. They use small tools during art and craft activities and when using their cutlery at meal times, so their small muscle movement and coordination are promoted very well.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Each child is valued and respected as an individual. Their routines, as discussed with the parents, are skilfully intertwined with the childminder's routine. Children are introduced to a variety of things that promote their understanding about other people's differences and similarities. Play resources and positive images are abundant, with activities connected to different festivals and celebrations enjoyed by the children at different times. For example, children made dragon masks and tasted different foods connected to the Chinese New Year. Children behave well and all know and follow the house rules, from the youngest to the oldest. They follow the 'traffic light' system that the childminder uses to help children learn how to moderate their own behaviour. Having these clear rules serves to promote the well-being of every child and enhance their awareness of each other's needs very well.

Children feel welcome and included into this family setting where all the children get to know all the family members well. Each child's individual needs are very successfully met by the childminder who works closely with parents and carers to ensure they are well informed and included in the life of the setting. Children discover the local community when walking in the immediate local area and go for interesting trips to places that are of relevance to children's particular interests, such as the military museum in Preston.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Space, time and resources are effectively organised to ensure children's individual needs are given utmost priority to help them make progress. The policies and procedures successfully underpin the care offered, promoting children's all round needs. However, some revision to two policy statements is required to reflect regulatory changes and to improve the clarity of information given to parents and carers. Children are never far from the childminder and always within her sight. Daily discussions with the parents keep them fully informed and involved in their child's care. The childminder's older children and husband occasionally help by playing with the children when they are at home. The childminder is exacting in her supervision of the children when they are in the company of other adults such as visitors to the home or when out in public places. Their overall safety and well-being are therefore maintained. The childminder is proactive in improving her child care skills by attending relevant group tutorial events, and her organised approach to the renewal of required training underlines her commitment to the children she cares for.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, one recommendation was made to improve the quality of care provided for children. This recommendation was to undertake a risk assessment in relation to the disassembled shed in the rear garden area.

During the intervening period, the childminder has removed the hazard connected to the disassembled shed. This has ensured that children's safety is not compromised.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- revise the child protection policy to reflect the correct name of the social services referral agency; expand the information given to parents to include how complaints

are handled and recorded and include clear information about Ofsted's name, address and telephone number.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk